

**REMARKS**

Claims 2-4 and 6-9 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 2 and 3 are amended. Claims 1 and 5 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter therein.

At the top of page 2, the Office Action objects to claims 1-3. Claim 1 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter therein. Claims 2 and 3 are amended to correct the informalities objected to by the Office Action. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the objection to claims 1-3 be withdrawn.

On pages 2-4, the Office Action rejects claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Publication No. 9-134208 to Taneka et al. (hereinafter "Taneka") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,754,846 to Rasmussen et al. (hereinafter "Rasmussen"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1 and 5 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter therein. For at least this reason, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1 and 5 as being unpatentable over Taneka in view of Rasmussen be withdrawn.

On page 5, the Office Action indicates that claims 2-4 and 6-9 are allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 2, from which claims 3, 4 and 6-9 depend, is rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of claim 1 from which it originally depended.

In view of the forgoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2-4 and 6-9 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:MRW/ksz

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